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ABSTRACT

Cultural factors that influence 14- to 17-year-old boys in southwest Ohio to become involved in the juvenile correctional system include the following: (1) lack of a structured family environment; (2) lack of empathy; (3) self-centeredness; and (4) a misplaced sense of masculinity. Treatment of the whole person in correctional residential facilities ought to fuse behavior modification and education. Although not a panacea for rehabilitating all youths, experiential learning programs have been found to have a calming effect on some. In Ohio, these two programs designed to provide "hands on" alternative education for delinquent boys were developed by the Upper Valley Junior Vocational School (UVJVS) in cooperation with the David L. Brown Youth Center and the West Central Juvenile Detention Center: agriculture science training developed in 1994 and machine technology skills training developed in 1996. (The goals, program descriptions and appendices comprise almost of the report. There are these three lengthy appendices related to the David L. Brown Youth Center: a program description; a welcoming letter given to new residents; and a sample program schedule. Also appended is the agreement between the UVJVS and the West Central Juvenile Detention Center.) (AJ)

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ED 473 656

Alternative Schooling Within Career Technical Educational Centers

By

Gene Cordonnier

Culture of the School

October 5, 2002

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Overview

This presentation and the associated abstract is designed to provide insight into ways that students and schools can benefit by providing unique alternative schooling for delinquent youth.

Introduction

Students participating in the two programs I will describe have formulated their behaviors and attitudes in a large part due to their cultural background. I will start with the cultural background that influences these youths who eventually become involved in the juvenile correctional system within the Southwest Ohio Region. Then, I will describe how career and technical schools can assist in the rehabilitation process.

I think most people would agree that the lack of a structured family environment that is rich with the nurturing support of parents could produce delinquent children fraught with emotional problems. The juvenile corrections system identifies aspects of these juvenile delinquents within the American culture. They attempt rehabilitation measures and, due to the democratic belief that education makes a difference in one's life, encourage them to stay in school. So "corrections schools" are involved in dealing with youths, with their rehabilitation and with their education, namely fourteen to seventeen year old adolescents. For the sake of this study, it will be limited to youths. The two particular institutions our school works with are the David L. Brown Youth Center, a twenty-four hour rehabilitation center for boys and for the more serious offender, the West Central Detention Center, also for boys, both located in Troy, Ohio.

Culture and Education

How strong are the cultural forces that strike against student values? Their lifestyle is so strongly affected that they are willing to "get into trouble". Developing good citizenship and social skills among these youths are contrary to their cultural practices. They are used to taking

advantage of people. They have tremendous peer pressure to conform to group identities. They want to achieve acceptance, but on their own terms; acceptance that was not received by a stable, healthy home life.

Attitudes they display are very much "me" oriented. If it feels OK, if it is good for me, then it is OK, regardless of the law. For example, if they see car keys left within a car, they see this condition differently than "we" would see the same situation. One might say "Gee, someone left their keys in the car. Perhaps we ought to tell someone." These youths see it as it is their right to take the car. For them, people are dumb and they are smart. So, the rules of decency to others using logic or society's norms are evaluated differently by them. They continue to formulate their cultural patterns from their "me" perspective until they are caught. Their perceptions and realities seem strange. They do not recognize the ways that familiar and democratic attitudes and behaviors benefit the good of society. In many cases, they do not have empathy for humanity.

These are only a few of the antecedents that lead a youth to being placed in a corrections facility, but certainly they are important. Others may be truant from school, misuse drugs or alcohol, inappropriate behavior, deviant attitudes, or unruliness at home. While they are in a correction facility and not being monitored, they will brag about their deviant behavior. Boys are particularly keen in mentioning how they used to carry a gun or use a knife to scare another person. This is referred to as "criminal pride." This gives them a feeling of being macho reinforcing one's status as being important within a group. Therefore, it is an important goal of a corrections facility to correct the holistic deviant behavior of the youth, change their attitude, all the while infusing the fact that education is a good and helpful practice. This is not an easy task.

There have been many attempts to correct this deviant behavior and make education important in their lives. I will mention two therapeutic methods. There is a ranch for boys and girls in Iowa where the youths have to work for a living. In 1993, I visited this ranch. Delinquent youth sent from the court system are assigned jobs and must take care of the horses, buffalo, deer, rabbits etc… to earn the privilege to stay on the ranch. Over a period of time, some youths bond with their animals and feed and protect them, knowing if they don't meet the needs of the animals, the animals may die. Special needs students seem to have an inclination for behavior modification when they work with animals. Animals need care to survive. They need daily maintenance and respond well to affection. This personalizes the contact between animals and youths and sometimes youths realize they must care for animals and people so others may care for them. This approach is not a panacea for rehabilitating all youths, but I know it also has a calming effect in training students in the Horticulture field. In our short course Horticulture training program, girls like to make flower arrangements for weddings or grow carnations for sale during Sweetest Day, among other occasions. Many of these students are on Individualized Education Plans and the teacher reports career development and academic learning gains.

Career-Technical Partnership

This information about providing "hands on" education then was a basis for developing the Agriculture Science training at the David L. Brown Youth Center and in providing Machine Technology training for selected youths from the West Central Detention Center in Troy. The Ag Science program started in 1994. Due to its success another program using machine technology skill training started in 1996.

Refer to the Appendix for the location and operational scenarios for both of these youth corrections facilities. Appendix A describes the David L. Brown Youth Center's purpose. Appendix B is the welcoming letter students receive when they are assigned to the David L. Brown Youth Center. When students enter the youth center, they have a structural environment much like the preschool opening ceremony described by Lois Peak in her book *Learning To Go To School in Japan* where the students are exposed to immediate structure.

The goals of the Ag Science program provide opportunities for behavior modifications.

- To provide residents of the David L. Brown Youth Center with and Agriscience program designed to assist youth to transition from the Center to advanced career preparation programs or to employment in an agricultural occupation.
- Each enrolled student will develop an Individualized Career Plan (ICP) and be able to articulate an occupational goal and an educational plan to achieve the goal.
- Each enrolled student will exhibit occupational competency gains as measured by the appropriate OVCA measures and by locally developed tests.
- To provide each student a career pathway which will lead to additional career preparation opportunities or employment in an agricultural occupation and life-long learning.
- To develop academic learning gains as evidenced by passage of all sections of the 9th grade proficiency test, progress toward or attainment of a high school diploma, performance on the Work Keys Assessment, or other appropriate assessments.
- To provide opportunities to develop employability, interpersonal, and leadership competencies.
- To provide opportunities for each student to develop a career passport.

Appendix C is the Program Schedule for the D. L. Brown Youth Center. The Ag Science program at the David L. Brown Youth Center provides a residential, therapeutic environment for "at-risk" youth between the ages of 12 and 17. Specifically, the Agriscience training program is provided to residents from age 14 to 17. The Youth Center provides intervention for youth with unruly and/or delinquent lifestyles. The Youth Center program is based on reality therapy/choice principles. The young men are taught to take responsibility for their attitude and behavior and to accept consequences or rewards for the choices they make. This "no excuse" approach requires

the resident to take full responsibility for their decisions and actions. With improved decision making and a career focused educational plan, students can successfully complete the David L. Brown Youth Center Program and transition into career preparation programs or employment. Through advisory committee input, meetings of educators at the local level, and meetings with correction personnel, it has been demonstrated that an Agriscience program can be a valuable career exploration and preparation program for these troubled youth.

Area agricultural and horticultural business and industry representatives serving in an advisory capacity have expresses support for the Agriscience program at the David L. Brown Youth Center and their need for skilled employees.

The Second Program that was started was the West Central Detention Center, Machine Technology Training Program.

The Precision Machining Program for the West Central Juvenile Detention Center was started in 1996. This program serves selected members of West Central's juvenile detention population after regular school hours. Students are transported to Upper Valley JVS for training, using the same equipment high school and adult students use to study Machine Technology. The program operates sixteen hours per week, Monday through Thursday, four hours per day. This is a 450 hour curriculum and takes about six months to complete. The curriculum includes safety training, basic machining operation on mills and lathes, correlated math, blueprint reading and employability skill instruction. Appendix D details the terms and conditions of the partnership between Upper Valley JVS and the West Central Juvenile Detention Center.

A review was conducted by the State Corrections Supervisor. The report states, "During my visit students were busy working on a variety of projects on several different types of

machine tools. They seemed focused on the task at hand and were eager to show the types of jobs they were working on. The instructor reported very few disciplines or disruptions from the students. Several of the students had recently been released from the detention center, but were continuing their machine trades program as a condition of release. All students are required to work towards a GED as a condition of release. Students still housed at the detention center are transported to and from the school by detention center staff. [A second review indicated that…] West Central students are focused and dedicated to doing their best work…. I spoke with several of the students about their experiences. All seemed positive about the program."

Conclusion:

Culture plays a large part in rehabilitating youths who have "gotten into trouble." The culture a youth is exposed to and lives within determines to a large part whether they conform to the laws or they break the laws and get into the juvenile correction system. Once they are in the correction system, the attempt to change their culture, rehabilitate their behaviors and to provide them an opportunity to get a good education is a challenge. The corrections culture strives to provide the best opportunities to change youth's previous cultural background.

With any education provided, that training needs to make sense to the youth. They need to find new meaning in their educational endeavors. They need to be externally and then hopefully internally motivated to live a new lifestyle devoid of deviant behavior. To make this education worthwhile "hands on" learning career and technical training was piloted and since has been widely viewed as being successful in its goals. Perhaps the greatest success is that other schools are recognizing that under certain conditions these concepts can be replicated throughout educational facilities in the United States.

Appendix

A. The David L. Brown Youth Center's Program

B. The David L. Brown Youth Center's Welcoming Letter

C. Program Schedule for David L. Brown Youth Center

D. Agreement Between the UVJVS and West Central Juvenile Detention Center

Appendix A

First, the David L. Brown Youth Center's program:

David L. Brown Youth Center

291 South Childrens Home Road

Troy, Ohio 45373

Phone: 937-339-1858 FAX: 937-335-7904

"Restoring trust in our youth…Hope for our community."

The **David L. Brown Youth Center** (formerly Miami County Youth Center) was established in 1987 as a residential treatment center governed by Miami County Juvenile Court. Each resident is referred by Juvenile Courts and Childrens Services Bureaus of the Miami Valley area. All youth placements are made by the Court in an effort to intervene and redirect troubled youth.

Residents live on-grounds in a "country farm" setting with an average 6-8 month placement period. The program model involves a 12-month on-grounds schooling based upon an individualized educational plan. Instructed by licensed teacher(s), residents receive academic credit transferable to their respective home school. A young man could receive GED accreditation if he is eligible.

Counseling services are provided by a full-time Masters Level (L.I.S.W. licensed) Therapist. Services include supervision, consultation, and direct contact with a Psychiatrist. The Psychiatrist provides clinical supervision of the Therapist and prescribes medication assessments for residents. The therapeutic services provide individual, group, and family counseling on a weekly basis. Psychiatric consultation is provided by Miami County Mental Health for youth who are in need of Psychotropic Medication consultation. Direct-care staff, called Resident Advisors, provide supervision, discipline, and guidance to residents on an individual and group basis. Resident Advisors assist in the treatment plan implemented by the Therapist and Psychiatrist.

Resident discipline and privileges are evaluated according to a Level System. Reality therapy and behavior modification are the treatment modalities underlying this Level System. Accordingly, residents may earn day or overnight passes with their parent/guardian. Residents learn appropriate behavioral boundaries and are challenged to accept responsibility and accountability for their behavior.

Appendix B

The **David L. Brown Youth Center** is committed to providing therapeutic intervention services for "at-risk" youth. Our staff is dedicated and purposed to fulfilling our vision to **"Restore trust in our youth...Hope for our community."**

WELCOME TO THE DAVID L. BROWN YOUTH CENTER

You are now a resident at David L. Brown Youth Center. We hope to help you solve your problems while you are here, and help you develop better ways to deal with your problems when you leave.

Because you are now living with other residents and staff, there are certain rules and regulations you will have to follow. It is hoped that you will make every effort to cooperate with the staff as well as follow the rules. The staff is here to assist you during this period of your life. We recognize it is a difficult time for you. The Resident Advisors will be working with you on a daily basis.

Unlike some placements, you will have the opportunity of continuing your education here at the David L. Brown Youth Center. You will be attending school Monday through Friday. The school program here will be different from your own school in some ways. Hopefully, you will find these differences enjoyable.

In order to keep the Center operating effectively, there will be certain responsibilities to perform, and these will be shared by all the residents on a daily basis. These include cleaning chores after meals, dishes, and personal tasks. You will be expected to perform these tasks daily as assuming self-responsibility is part of the program here at the DLBYC.

While you are here, you will be participating in a Level Program. This is the program which determines how long you are here and what privileges you earn. You will also be required to participate in individual/family counseling once per week, and in a drug/alcohol education group. Your cooperation and participation will aid you in working your way through the program.

We expect all residents to cooperate with each other and with the staff. But just in case everyone doesn't, we will take the necessary disciplinary action. We call these "consequences". During your cooperation you will learn about consequences and what to expect if you violate the rules here.

Some consequences may be minor, such as not being able to participate in an activity. Other consequences may result in detention or an appearance in Juvenile Court.

At times it will not be easy for you here. However, we hope you look at your placement here as an opportunity to deal with some difficult problems in your life. If you do so, you will find that you will benefit from this experience.

Appendix C

The following is the Program Schedule for the David L. Brown Youth Center:

Program Schedule:

	GROUP A (8+ STUDENTS)	GROUP B (8+ STUDENTS)
LABORATORY	8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
RELATED	10:35 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	3:35 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
RELATED	11:20 a.m. – 12:00 noon	4:20 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

(5 days/week-690 hrs./student/year)

ACADEMICS	12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Topical Outline:

OCAP competencies will be the basis for the Agriscience curriculum. The Curriculum will feature (but is not limited to) the following areas:

Plant Science/Production
Animal Science/Production
Horticulture
Natural Resources and Environmental Occupations
Development of basic mechanical competencies
Development of basic construction competencies
Leadership and employability skill development
Job shadowing/Job placement

Method of Instruction:

Laboratory/related with applied academics provided by Center staff.

Facilities:

Classroom with 6 computer stations
Greenhouse
Land Laboratory – 100 acres+
Large barn which includes an equipped 1300 sq. ft. Agrimechanics shop
Office and storage space for the instructor
A greenhouse is under construction

Instructor:

Certified Agriscience teacher with teaching experience in career technical settings and with juvenile delinquents.

Appendix D

The Agreement Between the UVJVS and the West Central Juvenile Detention Center

State of Ohio
Department of Education
Vocational and Adult Education

Per our discussion on April 12, 1996, the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education will recommend partial unit funding (.67) for a Machine Technology program at Upper Valley JVS to serve selected students of the West Central Juvenile Rehabilitation Center subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The agreement is to partially fund a pilot program for FY97 only. If the program should expand to a full unit, any additional costs will be borne by the West Central Juvenile Rehabilitation Center. Continued funding will be contingent on performance measures outlined below.

2. The curriculum will consist of selected competencies in the Machine Technology OCAP, and will total at least 450 hours of instruction by vocational teachers.

3. A student will be considered a completer after a minimum of 450 hours.

4. The program must have at least seventy five percent (75%) of its participants complete the 450 hour requirement.

5. Students must be at least 16 years of age to participate.

6. A minimum of 8 students (maximum 25) must be enrolled and actively participating at all times.

7. Sixty percent (60%) of the completers must be employed in occupations directly related to the training provided by this program.

8. Maintain a 1 year, 3 year, and 5 year follow-up for completers.

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